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### Rightly Dividing Dominion and *Pharmakeia*

In a postmodern world where clear categories are blurred, science and the state tend to conflate into one symbiotic system. Whatever the latest science says the state enforces – sometimes without question. Christians more than anyone should seek to cultivate true science. Christians above all should honor the state, seeing it as authority delegated from God Himself. The hard question is, what happens when the state backs science? If the state controls and dictates the role of science will it fulfill the dominion mandate? C. S. Lewis’ book *That Hideous Strength* deals with these issues in depth when an organization called the National Institute of Coordinated Experiments (N.I.C.E.) seeks to attain state-backed science. Mark Studdock, a character who initially supports this effort, says, “The real thing is that this time we’re going to get science applied to social problems and backed by the whole force of the state, just as the war has been backed by the whole force of the state in the past” (Lewis 38). Mark thinks that the state has the right to back science just like it backs war. But the Bible teaches that the only warranted means for a government to take dominion is through the administration of justice alone. Both Scripture and history confirm that attempts by governments to back science inevitably violate the dominion mandate. That infringement always leads to perilous outcomes.

True science is the study of God’s world with the *telos* of understanding it and benefiting from it. The goal of science is intrinsically interlocked with dominion mandate, which is God’s command to cultivate the earth and care for His creatures (Genesis 1:26, 29). Further, the

dominion mandate declares man's duty to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28b). Science should be divided into two categories with respect to the dominion mandate. There is either science that abides by God's dominion mandate or science that defies it. Dominion science produces – or seeks to produce – what Adam and Eve were told to do: be fruitful and multiply, take dominion, cultivate the world God had given them, and reap its harvest. The other kind of science is *pharmakeia* science; it seeks to sterilize, limit, organize, and profit from creation. In the Bible, *pharmakeia* is always the result of abusing science – it leads to evil outcomes. Strong's definition of *pharmakeia* (φαρμακεία) is: "medication ("pharmacy"), i.e. (by extension) magic (literally or figuratively):—sorcery, witchcraft." Rather than being dominion science, *pharmakeia* seeks to dominate through sorcerous science. In *That Hideous Strength*, dominion science is embodied by St. Anne's village life where merriment and joy are found. Contrarily, N.I.C.E.'s goal is to boost industry, mobilize talent, divide work, and make money, all with the backing of the state (Lewis 37). Sanctioned science is a fruit of obeying the dominion mandate the right way, whereas unsanctioned science is a fruit of twisting God's command.

N.I.C.E. wants science to be "backed by the whole force of the state, just as the war has been backed by the whole force of the state in the past" (Lewis 38). Christians readily acknowledge that the Bible commands us to take dominion of the earth. The fact that the Bible nowhere forbids governments to back science may seem compelling evidence that the state can also take dominion by means of science to better society. It is true that the Bible positively commands governments to wield the sword of justice. It does not, however, command it to back any other endeavours. Paul makes it clear that the state "is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer" (Romans 13:4). Yet the state is never commanded to

back the church, schools, or science. Scriptural examples of kingdoms or governments that assume authority over science are portrayed as *pharmakeia*, not dominion. While God allowed Moses to perform signs, Pharaoh (the state authority) “summoned the wise men and the sorcerers, and they, the magicians of Egypt, also did the same by their secret arts” (Exodus 7:11). The word used is *pharmakeia* – sorcery. It could be argued that science and sorcery are different. Dominion science and sorcery are truly separate, but *pharmakeia* science is simply a modern form of medieval magic. Douglas Wilson says that N.I.C.E began by “believing themselves to be men of reason and science, but they end by throwing themselves headlong into necromancy (communication with the dead using the evil magic)” (Wilson 669). Lewis saw that state-backed science leads to *pharmakeia*, not dominion.

History also supports the claim that state-backed science leads to *pharmakeia*. When the state declares what science is and how it should be applied to each individual citizen, inhumane results will follow. For instance, the Incan empire required that the elite class of children have their heads tied to stiff boards so as to shape their skulls into a volcano shape (Glaser). Hitler’s state-backed science allowed Nazi scientists to experiment on Jews. They froze them, dropped them out of planes, experimented on them with new drugs and medicine, and gassed them (Holocaust Encyclopedia). Chinese women were ordered by the state to bind their feet for the sake of beauty and in the name of science (Cartwright). All of these examples show that state-backed science seeks to restrain, limit, and abuse God’s creation – it is overwhelmingly sin filled and sorcerous. In America’s context, state-backed science destroys healthcare capitalism and leads to the sterilization of citizens. Private hospitals find themselves unable to compete with state-backed hospitals. The Federal Department of Agriculture seeks to deter local farmers from producing anything but corn. The Social Security Service extracts thousands of dollars in tax

from each citizen, yet the elderly are left to their own devices under awful circumstances. Babies in the womb are “scientifically” rationalized into cells. Just as Pharoah used *pharmakeia* to justify drowning Israelite children in the Nile, so also America uses science to justify slaughtering babies in the womb. All these examples demonstrate that the state is not producing life, but stifling it; not cultivating the ground, but limiting and abusing it; not rejoicing in creation, but sterilizing it. The result is an unethical standard – a religion if you will – where man is god and *pharmakeia* is his justification for dominating rather than taking dominion.

Modern healthcare is better described as deathcare. Instead of nurturing patients to life, modern science focuses on death and how it can be administered to those who are unfit for life. State-backed science violates the dominion mandate. It is not fruitful, does not multiply, and scoffs at the sanctity of human life. It is a whitewashed tomb; a *pharmakeia*. The state is only sanctioned to administer justice, and any attempt to go beyond that role leads to chaos. By attempting to free itself from “red tape” (Lewis 23), N.I.C.E. may have attained state-backed science, but in doing so it gave up any notion of real justice and law. At the end of the story, “Long before he reached St. Anne’s, Mark had come to realize that either he himself or else the world about him, was in a very strange condition” (Lewis 35). He was right. Whenever mankind abuses God’s good gifts and maliciously leers at His laws, evil follows. Isaiah provided extremely applicable warnings of *pharmakeia*’s fruits: “These two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day; the loss of children and widowhood shall come upon you in full measure, in spite of your many sorceries and the great power of your enchantments” (Isaiah 47:9). The state’s job is to stipulate justice. If it can do that, then its citizens can freely and rightly fulfill the dominion mandate as God intended. And if certain citizens fail at their dominion duty, *then* the

state should step in, so as to hold those lawbreakers accountable to God's dominion mandate, which clearly perceived and written on our hearts.

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